



Adler

By David Adler

Celebrations this week of Abraham Lincoln's birthday should include his advice in an October 16, 1854, speech in Peoria, Illinois, at a juncture not dissimilar from the circumstances that torment our nation today. Polarization and division, violence, voter intimidation and murder, and the spreading racism, exacerbated by enactment of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which permitted the extension of slavery, set the stage for Lincoln to emerge from retirement in politics to condemn the new law and declare slavery immoral. He characterized it as "monstrous injustice" that betrayed the

foundational principles of the United States. Lincoln's "Peoria Speech," marked his historic ascension as a national leader and, ultimately, as a giant whose voice speaks to us across the ages.

Lincoln, perhaps the most gifted of America's rhetoricians and a literary artist whose style strikes the "mystic cords of memory," unlike any other president, or politician, for that matter, appealed to his audience in terms that resonate in our time. He said, "Let us re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and—with it—the practices and policy which harmonize with it." He appealed to all regions of the nation and added, "let all lovers of liberty everywhere, join in the great and good work. If we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union, but shall have so saved it, as to make and to keep it forever worthy of the saving." As readers know, Lincoln's presidency was devoted to saving the Union, in a form "worthy of the saving." His

words in Peoria were but prologue to his epilogue.

For Lincoln, the majesty of the Declaration of Independence, which he called the "sheet iron of the republic," lay in the self-evident proposition that "all men are created equal." This was, for him, the foundation stone of America and the bedrock of his own moral and political philosophy. He saw in this first principle a pledge of future actions, a statement of aspirations beyond achievement in the Constitutional Convention, to be fulfilled upon the occasion of America's political maturity. Lincoln's conviction on this score, influenced by his embrace of the Golden Rule, was manifested in his own declaration: "as I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy." His opposition to slavery, preeminently a function of his moral code, was illuminated by the calculus of logic and his commit-

~~ We the People ~~

## “Heeding Lincoln’s on His Birthday: Let Us Re-adopt the Declaration of Independence and its Principles”

ment to the principles and values of democracy.

Lincoln's plea for re-contracting American society in accordance with the Declaration of Independence as the fundamental charter of the nation, invoked a high standard for the salvation of the nation. If "lovers of liberty" pledge to restore the principles of the Declaration, beginning with remembrance and renewal of the self-evident principle that "all men are created equal," then America will have saved the "Union" in a manner "forever worthy of the saving." Such a union could not be worthy of the saving if it remained "half slave and half free." Lincoln's moral compass, which taught him to identify and pursue what he discerned to be right required, consistent with the Golden Rule, respect for the rights of others, which was a necessary predicate to protect our own rights. This distillation represented a commitment to democratic governance--

"government of the people, by the people, for the people."

Lincoln's system of thought, built upon the pillars of the Golden Rule and the principle that "all men are created equal," shunned Machiavellian values that embraced the philosophy of might makes right, the ends justify the means and other facets of autocratic rule. A nation "worthy of saving," he believed, should be grounded in the principles of the Declaration, not one governed by acts of brute force that ignored equal justice. Born and raised in an antislavery ethos in Kentucky and Indiana and influenced by the

transcendentalism of American writers such as Emerson and Thoreau, Lincoln believed in the convictions of conscience. His conscience taught him that all men "are created equal," and throughout his career, guided by principles of pragmatism that, occasionally, for reasons of war, tempered his conscience, he sought to make that self-evident principle a living reality for the nation. Though Lincoln was unsuccessful in making it the conscience of the nation in his lifetime, his words, wisdom and efforts speak to us today and inspire Americans to seek it in ours.

## DeCoteau sentenced for manslaughter

A Minot man who pleaded guilty to manslaughter for the August 2025 shooting death of Dorian Thomas, 19, has been sentenced to serve seven years with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Johnathan Lee DeCoteau, 19, appeared in North Central District Court Wednesday morning, Feb. 11, for sentencing. DeCoteau had previously entered a change of plea, pleading guilty to manslaughter, a Class B felony, and tampering with physical evidence, a Class C felony. One Class A misdemeanor count of providing false information to law enforcement was dismissed in accor-

dance with a plea agreement.

According to court documents, on Aug. 13, 2025, Minot Central Dispatch received a report of an individual bleeding and lying between garages of a northeast Minot apartment complex. The victim was eventually identified as Thomas, who was pronounced deceased at the scene from a gunshot wound to his head.

According to the affidavit of probable cause, DeCoteau arrived on scene and provided conflicting statements to law enforcement regarding the events, including claiming Thomas had harmed himself. An autopsy and other witness statements

would disprove DeCoteau's version of events.

Judge Gary Lee sentenced DeCoteau to serve 20 years with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, to first serve five years for the manslaughter count; with credit for 207 days served. Fifteen years of DeCoteau's sentence will be suspended pending the successful completion of five years of supervised probation. He was also ordered to have no contact with the victim's family along with a 150 foot distance. Lee also sentenced DeCoteau to serve two years consecutively for the tampering count.

DeCoteau was assessed \$2,242 in restitution and \$125 in court fines and fees.

DeCoteau still faces a Class C felony theft charge, for the alleged theft of the firearm used in the Aug. 13, 2025, shooting. According to court documents, a household member of DeCoteau's reported two firearms were missing, one of which matched the description for the one used in the shooting. DeCoteau has waived the preliminary hearing in and pleaded not guilty to the charge.

## Dakota Gardener



Kalb

By Tom Kalb, Horticulturist  
NDSU Extension

Tomato production in the Dakotas is about to change.

There is a new wave of tomato varieties that will provide more colors, better flavors and higher yields.

Scientists have cracked the genetic code of tomato. They have identified new genes to improve the crop. Through natural breeding (not GMO) techniques, scientists are using these genes to develop new varieties with amazing qualities.

The latest breakthrough is BadaBing! This is one of the first varieties to resist Septoria leaf spot, the most common disease of tomatoes in the Dakotas. Septoria is a fungus that causes spotting and browning of tomato leaves late in the season. This breakthrough will help our vines stay healthy and productive until frost.

You won't hear much about BadaBing! The seeds of this cherry tomato are rare and expensive. Nevertheless, this news is very exciting.

That's because this special gene can now be bred into future varieties. The same thing occurred over the past 10 years with early blight and late blight. Now we have several varieties that resist these diseases.

Another breakthrough has led to the Plus varieties. Celebrity is one of the most popular varieties in the Dakotas. Now we have Celebrity Plus. Celebrity Plus has all the great qualities of Celebrity, with better fruit quality and greater disease resistance. The same goes for other varieties such as Better Boy Plus, Big Beef Plus



New varieties such as BadaBing! will change tomato production in the Dakotas. (photo by All-American Selections)

and Lemon Boy Plus. Look for them.

A new group of varieties is coming out of the Blue Ridge Mountains. These varieties resist diseases and grow well in cool summers. Mountain Fresh Plus and Mountain Merit have excelled in our trials. A new beefsteak called Mountain Man is available this spring. This variety is reported to have a perfect balance of sweetness and acidity, making it perfect for slicing and topping burgers and sandwiches. It sounds delicious!

A bonus of the Mountain tomatoes is that their vines are determinate. This is important because determinate vines stay compact. They do not need to be pruned and can be easily trellised with cages or weaving. Determinate varieties usually yield earlier than indeterminate vines, which are more vigorous and require a lot more work.

Another big trend is the improvement of heirloom tomatoes. Gardeners enjoy the taste of heirloom fruits, but the vines are unproductive and susceptible to disease.

Scientists are now developing hybrid heirlooms that have the beauty and flavor of heirloom fruits, but with productive, disease-resistant vines.

A good example is Cherokee Carbon. This is a cross between the popular heirlooms Cherokee Purple and Carbon. This new hybrid has the special flavors of these two purple heirlooms, but it ripens earlier, produces more fruits, resists cracking and fights

diseases. I can't wait to try it.

I also look forward to growing Wonderstar Pink. This new hybrid produces pink tomatoes like the famous heirloom Brandywine, but its fruits are firmer and ripen earlier. Its compact, two-foot vines resist diseases and are easy to grow.

Get to know the new and colorful cherry tomatoes. Gardeners have raved over the golden cherry Sungold for its intense, fruity flavor in recent years. This year, we will test Sunorange, which has larger fruits that crack less. We are going to test chocolate cherry tomatoes, too. These will be great for snacking.

You won't find many of these new varieties in garden centers yet. You will need to search for the varieties online. Aim to sow the seeds in late March to early April.

I encourage you to visit our website at [ndsu.ag/gardentrials](https://ndsu.ag/gardentrials) and download our list of recommended varieties. In that publication, there is also a list of companies that you can contact for seeds. Nearly all these companies offer free catalogs.

Many of these new varieties will be tested in gardens across our region. If you want to evaluate the varieties for North Dakota State University, you can request our online catalog from our website.

A revolution in tomato production is upon us. Let's explore and enjoy!

For more information about gardening, contact your local NDSU Extension agent.

### SECTION 000200

#### INVITATION TO BID

Notice is hereby given that

**ROLETTE COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY  
ROLLA, NORTH DAKOTA**

will accept bids for

**LOW INCOME HOUSING REHABILITATION  
ROLETTE COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY  
ROLETTE & DUNSEITH, ND**

According to Drawings and Specifications prepared by Michael J. Burns Architects, Ltd., Moorhead, Minnesota, 56560.

Electrical Prime Bids will be received for Electrical Work only.

Sealed proposals will be received by the Architect until **2:00 PM, local time, Monday, February 23, 2026**. Bids must be delivered before the time and date indicated above to Michael J. Burns Architects, Ltd. located at 824 Center Avenue, Moorhead, MN, 56560 where bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Architect will also send out a Teams Meeting invite prior to the bid opening to Contractors listed on the Planholders List that would like to attend the Bid Opening virtually.

Documents may be examined at:

Michael J. Burns Architects, Ltd., Moorhead, Minnesota  
FM Builders Exchange, 1010 Page Drive, Fargo, ND  
Grand Forks Builders and Traders Exchange, Grand Forks, ND  
Bismarck Builders Exchange, Bismarck, ND  
Minot Builders Exchange, Minot, ND  
Plains Builders Exchange, Sioux Falls, SD  
Minnesota Builders Exchange (MBEX)

All Bidders that would like to be placed on the Plan Holder's List or secure electronic copies of the proposed Bid Documents shall e-mail: [luke@mjbaldt.com](mailto:luke@mjbaldt.com)

**Envelopes containing bids must show on the front face the Contractor's name, address and be endorsed: "Low Income Housing Rehabilitation, Rolette County Housing Authority, Rolette & Dunseith, ND."**

Each Bid shall be accompanied by two separate envelopes. The first envelope shall contain a Bidder's Bond in a sum equal to (5%) five percent of the full amount of the Bid, executed by the Bidder as principal and by a surety company authorized to do business in this state, conditioned that if the principal's Bid be accepted and the contract awarded, within ten days after notice of award, will execute and effect a contract in accordance with the terms of the Bid and a contractor's bond as required by law and the regulations and determinations of the governing board. Per NDCC 48-01.2-05(4) the envelope with the bidder's security should contain the North Dakota Contractor's license or certification of renewal issued by the secretary of State. The Contractor must be licensed for the highest amount of his bid combination including alternates. Such license must have been in effect at least 10 days prior to the date of the bid opening.

The second envelope marked "Bid Proposal", shall contain the two copies of the Bid Form supplied with the Bidding documents or through addenda. The envelope containing Bid Proposal shall acknowledge receipt of all addenda both on the envelope and the Bid Proposal form.

No bids will be read or considered which do not fully comply with the North Dakota bond and license requirements. Any deficient bid submitted shall be resealed and returned to the bidder.

Bid security shall be made payable to Rolette County Housing Authority, Rolla North Dakota. Bid security of the two lowest Bidders will be retained until Contract has been awarded and executed, but no longer than 30 days.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive informalities therein.

There will not be a pre-bid walkthrough.

Published for Rolette County Housing Authority, Rolla, North Dakota by their authority.  
Dated this 2nd day of February 2026.  
By: Terry Hanson, Executive Director

**END OF SECTION 00 0200**